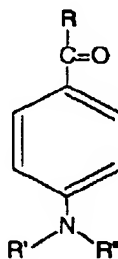


**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend the claims in the subject patent application as follows:

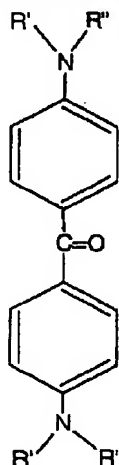
1. (currently amended) A functionalized lithium initiator made by a process which comprises (1) reacting m-diisopropenylbenzene with a tertiary alkyl lithium compound in an aromatic solvent at a temperature which is within the range the range of about 0°C to about 100°C to produce a dilithium initiator, and (2) reacting a dilithium the dilithium initiator with an alkylaminoaryl compound of the structural formula:



wherein R, R', and R'' can be the same or different, wherein R is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen atoms, alkyl groups, aryl groups, alkaryl groups, and amino aryl groups, and wherein R' and R'' represent alkyl groups.

2.-3. (canceled)

4. (original) A functionalized lithium initiator as specified in claim 1 wherein the alkylaminoaryl compound is of the structural formula:



wherein R' and R'' can be the same or different and wherein R' and R'' represent alkyl groups.

5. (original) A functionalized lithium initiator as specified in claim 4 wherein R' and R'' represent methyl groups.

6. (original) A functionalized lithium initiator as specified in claim 4 wherein R represents a hydrogen atom and wherein R' and R'' represent methyl groups.

7. (original) A functionalized lithium initiator as specified in claim 4 wherein the alkyl groups contain from 1 to about 8 carbon atoms.

8. (original) A functionalized lithium initiator as specified in claim 4 wherein the alkyl groups contain from 1 to about 4 carbon atoms.

9.-18. (canceled)

19. (original) A functionalized lithium initiator as specified in claim 1 wherein the dilithium initiator is reacted with the alkylaminoaryl compound at a temperature which is within the range of about -70°C to about 20°C.

20. (original) A functionalized lithium initiator as specified in claim 4 wherein the dilithium initiator is reacted with the alkylaminoaryl compound at a temperature which is within the range of about -60°C to about 0°C.

21. (new) A functionalized lithium initiator as specified in claim 1 wherein step (1) is conducted in the absence of amines.

22. (new) A functionalized lithium initiator as specified in claim 1 wherein step (1) is conducted at a temperature which is within the range of about 10°C to about 70°C.

23. (new) A functionalized lithium initiator as specified in claim 22 wherein the aromatic solvent is an alkyl benzene.

24. (new) A functionalized lithium initiator as specified in claim 23 wherein the alkyl group contains from 1 to about 8 carbon atoms.

25. (new) A functionalized lithium initiator as specified in claim 23 wherein the alkyl group contains from 1 to about 4 carbon atoms.

26. (new) A functionalized lithium initiator as specified in claim 22 wherein the aromatic solvent is ethyl benzene.

27. (new) A functionalized lithium initiator as specified in claim 1 wherein step (1) is conducted at a temperature which is within the range of about 20°C to about 40°C.